

REMARKS

This application has been carefully reviewed in light of the Office Action dated January 25, 2008. Claims 1 to 15 are pending in the application, of which Claims 1, 11, 14 and 15 are independent. Reconsideration and further examination are respectfully requested.

Claims 1 to 5 and 7 to 15 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over U.S. Published Appln. No. 2001/0046065 (Furukawa) in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,134,568 (Tonkin). Claim 6 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over Furukawa in view of Tonkin, and in further view of U.S. Patent No. 6,128,451 (Fukuchi). Reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection are respectfully requested.

The present invention concerns an apparatus or method that displays a process flow list wherein a plurality of procedures constituting the printing job are listed in the order of execution and the plurality of procedures include work procedures to be performed by a user and process procedures to be performed by respective printing devices included in a device combination that is capable of executing the printing job. This allows a user who has requested the print job to confirm or understand what processes are to be performed in order to execute the print job and on which processes will be performed on which ones of a plurality of printing devices. In addition, as some printing processes require a user's manual processing, the list provides an indication to the user that they should handle a respective processes. Therefore, the user can effectively confirm and handle the printing job as required.

Turning to specific claim language, amended independent Claim 1 is directed to a printing control apparatus which performs a printing process employing a plurality of printing devices. The apparatus includes a printing attribute acquisition unit configured to acquire an attribute of a printing job to be processed; an adaptive environment determination unit

configured to obtain device combinations capable of executing the printing job based on performance information representing at least performance of each of the plurality of printing devices and the acquired attribute of the printing job; and a display unit configured to display a process flow list representing a process flow to execute the printing job by employing the device combinations. The process flow list is a list in which a plurality of procedures which constitute the printing job are listed in the order of execution, and the plurality of procedures include work procedures to be performed by a user and process procedures to be performed by respective devices included in the device combinations obtained by the adaptive environment determination unit.

Applicant respectfully submits that the cited references, namely Furukawa and Tonkin, considered either alone or in combination, fail to disclose or suggest all of the features of the apparatus of Claim 1. In particular, the cited references, either alone or in combination, fail to disclose or suggest at least the features of displaying a process flow list representing a process flow to execute the print job by employing device combinations, wherein the process flow list is a list in which a plurality of procedures which constitute the printing job are listed in the order of execution, and wherein the plurality of procedures include work procedures to be performed by a user and process procedures to be performed by respective devices included in the device combinations.

In the current Office Action, it is contended that Paragraph [0096] of Furukawa discloses a process flow presentation means. However, the cited portions of Furukawa merely describe an information list 10 including locations and speeds of available printers. The information list 10 is displayed and a user can select any desired printer(s) based on his/her analysis of the printer information. The printers selected by the user are displayed in a different

manner from that of the non-selected printers. However, the display manner is not related to an execution order as featured in the present claims. As clearly described in Paragraph [0097] of Furukawa, the selected printers execute the same procedure in parallel.

Therefore, Furukawa does not disclose or suggest displaying a process flow list representing a process flow to execute the printing job by employing the device combinations, wherein the process flow list is a list in which a plurality of procedures which constitute the printing job are listed in the order of execution, and wherein the plurality of procedures include work procedures to be performed by a user and process procedures to be performed by respective devices included in the device combinations.

Furthermore, while Tonkin discloses displaying a print preview with positions at which a printed document is to be bound, a user cannot recognize, from the print preview, when they should bind the document. This is because Tonkin does not display a process flow having process steps to the user.

Applicants have reviewed the remaining reference, namely Fukuchi, and submit that this reference fails to supply that which is missing from Furukawa and Tonkin.

In light of the deficiencies of Furukawa, Tonkin and Fukuchi as discussed above, Applicants submit that amended independent Claim 1 is now in condition for allowance and respectfully request same.

Amended independent Claims 11, 14 and 15 are directed to a method, a computer-readable medium and a computer program product, respectively, substantially in accordance with the apparatus of Claim 1. Accordingly, Applicants submit that Claims 11, 14 and 15 are also now in condition for allowance and respectfully request same.

The other pending claims in this application are each dependent from the independent claims discussed above and are therefore believed allowable for at least the same reasons. Because each dependent claim is also deemed to define an additional aspect of the invention, however, the individual consideration of each dependent claim on its own merits is respectfully requested.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, the entire application is believed to be in condition for allowance, and such action is respectfully requested at the Examiner's earliest convenience.

CONCLUSION

No claim fees are believed due; however, should it be determined that additional claim fees are required, the Director is hereby authorized to charge such fees to Deposit Account 50-3939.

Applicants' undersigned attorney may be reached in our Costa Mesa, CA office at (714) 540-8700. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below-listed address.

Respectfully submitted,

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